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THE HUMANESOCIETY

OF THE UNITED STATES

CLOSE-UP REPORT

U.S. Declares War on Coyotes

*Department of Interior
reinstates cruel
killing methods*

Coyote puppies—some barely a few days old—are the newest victims of the Department of the Interior's continuing attack on the nation's wildlife. These innocent babies have been singled out to be killed horribly and brutally, allegedly to help solve the complex problems of the U.S. sheep and cattle industries.

The coyote has long been perceived as a threat by ranchers who graze their sheep on U.S. public lands. At the ranchers' insistence, U.S. government employees are paid to shoot coyotes from helicopters and airplanes, ambush them in cruel steel-jaw leg-hold traps, and plant cyanide guns that explode in the coyotes' faces.

These coyotes—some 58,000 in 1981 alone—are killed each year in the name of "predator control," along with thousands of bobcats, mountain lions, bears, badgers, and foxes; by government workers whose salaries *you* pay. And now, thanks to the actions of President Reagan and Interior Secretary Watt, two more inhumane killing methods are being added to the government's coyote-killing arsenal.

One of these methods has already been resumed. Denning, the killing of coyote pups as they lie in their dens, was banned as a predator-control method in 1979 by then-Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus because it was inhumane and ineffective. Andrus then directed the development and use of nonlethal, non-capture methods for protecting livestock. But recent pressure, especially from sheep ranchers,

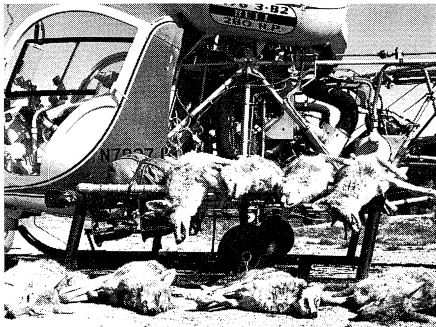


who unfairly blame coyotes for nearly all their financial troubles, prompted Secretary Watt's Interior Department to officially reinstate denning as an "acceptable" method of killing coyotes. Denning began this spring, with the onset of the coyotes' whelping season. The HSUS tried to prevent the resumption of denning by filing suit in Federal District Court, but Judge June Green denied our request for an injunction. Her decision is currently being appealed.

Another threat, not only to coyotes, but also to hundreds of thousands of other wild animals that live on the public lands of the West, is the proposed reregistration of a dangerous chemical called Compound 1080.

It was widely used until President Nixon banned it in 1972 because it poisoned anything that ate it, it was cruel, and it didn't protect the sheep from predators. That ban, upheld by Presidents Ford and Carter, was recently lifted by President Reagan, and the Environmental Protection Agency is currently holding the hearings required by law in order to reregister this chemical.

The Humane Society of the United States is irrevocably opposed to the unabated, cruel, and unnecessary practice of killing animals in the name of "predator control." The resumed use of denning and the threat of reinstating 1080 makes our—and your—actions even more urgent.



These coyotes were shot from a helicopter by workers whose salaries are paid with your tax money.

For more than 50 years a formal part of the U.S. government policy has been the organized, institutionalized killing of coyotes," wrote one newspaper columnist. "U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees have trapped them, snared them, shot them from the ground and the air, subdued them with dogs, gassed them in their dens, surprise-attacked them with buried poison guns, poisoned them with meat baits hiding killer chemicals. Last year (1981) that effort cost more than \$8 million and claimed 58,000 coyotes."

And who pays the bill? We, the taxpayers, do. We pay the first time by subsidizing the grazing fees for those ranchers who use public lands. Then we pay the salaries of the government workers whose job it is to kill these animals, and for the traps,

guns, and other instruments of torture they use to kill them with. Finally, we pay the price of losing a significant portion of our valuable natural heritage.

Dr. John Grandy, HSUS Vice President for Wildlife and Environment and a former member of the Animal Damage Control Advisory Committee to the Secretary of the Interior, calls predator control "one of the most abusive wildlife management practices. As currently practiced, predator control is non-selective, imprecise, haphazard, and often brutally inhumane. Hundreds of thousands of animals are killed merely because they belong to a predatory species. Almost as many others are killed simply because they are in the way."

In their zeal to wipe out a supposed "problem," however, ranchers and even government officials seldom stop to consider the important role coyotes and other predators play in the ecosystem. They forget that predators reduce rodent populations and clean the rangelands by eating carcasses of animals that died from a variety of causes.

Even more inexcusable is that it has been shown that mass killing of predators *does not* accomplish the goal of reducing livestock losses. Studies have shown that using sheep herders, guard dogs, and/or lambing sheds are significantly more effective at reducing losses—and significantly less dangerous—than widespread random killing.



Ranchers won't have to worry about whether either of these innocent coyote pups will grow up to molest sheep. Unfortunately, the pups also will never grow up to play their important role in the ecosystem of the western plains.

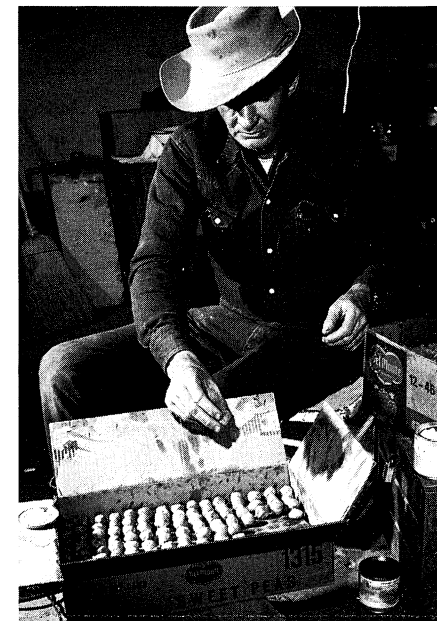
What's Wrong With 1080?

Sodium monofluoroacetate, also known as Compound 1080, is an extremely toxic chemical—only .05 of an ounce can kill a man. Originally developed during World War II as a rodent poison, 1080 became popular for coyote control in the late 1940's when scientists discovered it is highly toxic to members of the dog family. Death from 1080 poisoning is horribly cruel. Testified our HSUS wildlife biologist at an Environmental Protection Agency hearing last year: "...1080 still results in prolonged convulsions, hyperactivity, and vomiting. Such symptoms, which end in death by respiratory failure in the coyote, continue for up to five hours before the animal finally succumbs."

But 1080 kills more than just coyotes. The Interior Department has admitted that meat baits concealing 1080 and other poisons have killed thousands of other "non-target" animals. Included, no doubt, were such endangered animals as bald eagles, California condors, black-footed ferrets, and red wolves. Compound 1080 can also ricochet through the food chain,

killing animals that prey on animals who died from the chemical, and posing a significant risk of low-level poisoning to animals who aren't killed immediately.

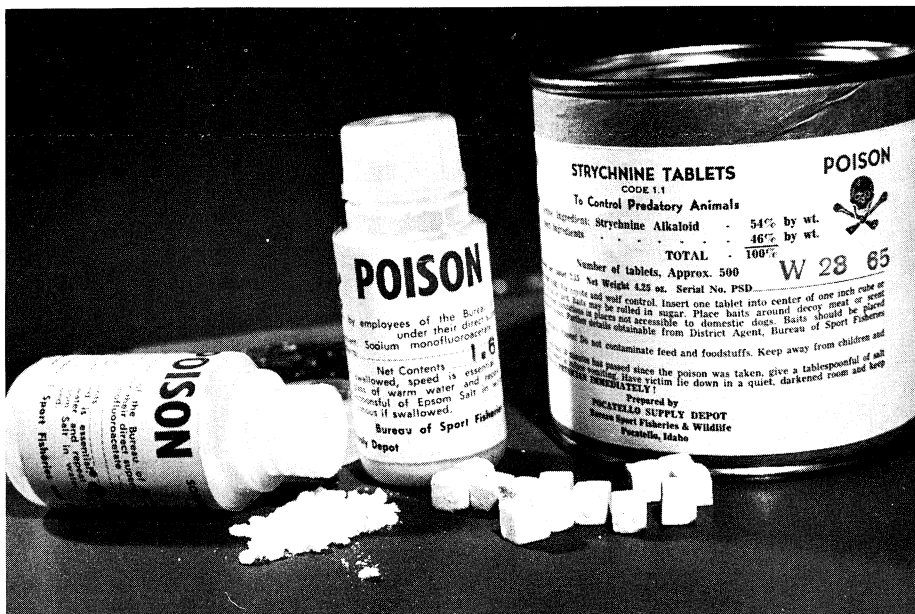
But perhaps most ironic is that the method by which the Administration plans to use 1080 is not only futile, but also actually counterproductive to the goal of cutting down livestock losses. It is known that many coyotes don't prey on sheep but eat carrion or rodents instead. If 1080 is approved for use in baits, it will poison the coyotes that eat carrion bait instead of the ones that kill sheep. It will actually encourage the spread of the animals that are causing the sheep ranchers problems.



What's Wrong With Denning?

The government's 1979 Environmental Impact Statement innocently calls denning "locating and removing the young (coyotes) from their den." But it's actually a far more brutal process. Sometimes the pups are fished from their dens with barbed-wire hooks that catch their flesh, then are clubbed to death. In other cases, liquid is poured into the den, set on fire, and the pups die of burns or suffocation. Gas canisters that create a very hot chemical fire can also be inserted into the den to suffocate the pups; however, in many cases the frightened pups will try to climb out of the den and are scorched to death.

Not only is denning cruel—it simply doesn't work. Denning kills only the coyote pups, whose only offense was being born. The parents, thought to be killing sheep, are not touched.



These are some of the "tools" of the predator control trade. Sheep and cattle ranchers are currently pressuring the government to once again permit the use of the deadly poison Compound 1080.



(Above left), A U.S. Government worker fashions poison-filled meat baits of the sort that would be used if a return to Compound 1080 use is allowed. (Left), Government workers inject 1080 into the carcasses of sheep. Both of these methods are counterproductive to the goal of reducing predator-related livestock losses because scientists are finding that these methods kill those animals who eat bait or carrion. But, they are not necessarily the same ones that attack livestock. Killing those coyotes that don't bother livestock makes it easier for the ones that do to reproduce and make the problem worse.

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Predator control programs don't kill just predators. These dogs were the victims of explosive baits set out for coyotes.

What The HSUS Is Doing

The HSUS believes denning and the use of Compound 1080 to kill coyotes is cruel and unnecessary, and we are putting those beliefs into action. In April, we sued Interior Secretary James Watt to prevent our members from losing any more of our natural wildlife heritage. The suit attempted to halt denning, and although we lost in the District Court, we are appealing because we believe denning is inhumane, wasteful, and conducted illegally. The portion of our suit to prevent Interior from using 1080 "experimentally" has yet to be addressed by the Court.

"Denning exterminates young animals which otherwise would play a necessary and beneficial part in the ecological system," according to the suit. "At the same time, it is ineffective in reducing livestock losses due to predation because it is not directed against offending individual adult animals which are likely to continue killing livestock after the pups are denned." As for 1080, the suit charges that "1080 is not an effective method of predator control. The administrative record shows that livestock losses to predation have not decreased, and may even have increased, during the 1960's and early 1970's when 1080 was used widely in the West.

The HSUS is also actively participating in ongoing hearings being conducted by the Environmental Protec-

tion Agency (EPA) on 1080. Under the law, these hearings must be held before the substance can be reregistered and once again available for use as a coyote killer. We are providing expert testimony aimed at convincing officials that 1080 is a dangerous and inappropriate poison and that it should not be reregistered. "The only new evidence that we have seen corrobo-

rates what we already know and what many others have already expressed," testified The HSUS's wildlife biologist last summer, "that 1080 is a dangerous toxicant with proven environmental hazards; it causes a prolonged and inhumane death of its victims; and it would easily be abused even if it were reintroduced with specified restrictions."

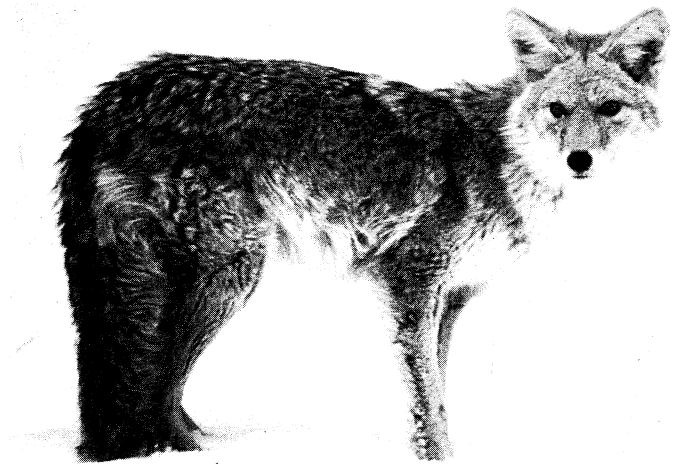


2100 L Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037 (202) 452-1100

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What You Can Do

The public lands of the West—and the wildlife that inhabits those lands—belong to all of us. Don't let the livestock industry dictate a policy that deprives us of our precious wildlife. Here are a few ways you can help:

- Write to President Reagan (The White House, Washington, D.C. 20500). Tell the President you believe denning is both inhumane and ineffective and he should order Secretary Watt to reinstate the ban on this shameful practice. Tell him to order more research and place more emphasis on nonlethal methods of predator control.
- Write your U.S. Representative and Senators (House/Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515/ 20510). First, ask them to urge Secretary Watt to reinstate the ban on denning. Second, ask them to pressure the Environmental Protection Agency not to reregister 1080.
- Finally, help The HSUS in our fight to protect coyotes and other wildlife from falling victim to inhumane predator-control practices. Your tax-deductible contribution will help us continue our legislative, legal, and educational battles to protect not only these animals but all animals from painful and untimely deaths. You are the only spokesmen these animals have. Please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope to send your contribution today.